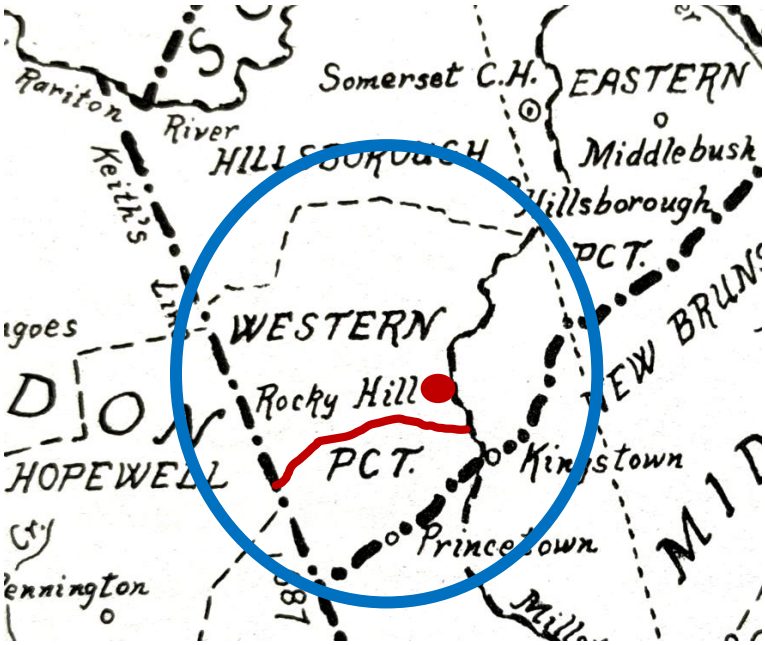
What a sight it must have been!

August 1781: a slice of time in Montgomery's history

Back in Revolutionary War times (1775-1783), Montgomery was known as the Western Precinct of Somerset County. Large swathes of land had been purchased and divided up into adjoining 200+ acre parcels by Dutch fathers, with names such as Ten Broeck, Van Dike, Van Horn and Vanderveer, for their sons to clear and farm. There were few roads – no 206, no 518, no 601, no Orchard Road. Pathways (many times pathways previously used by Lenape Indians) were developed so people could get from one place to another but settlers and soldiers also followed the waterways.



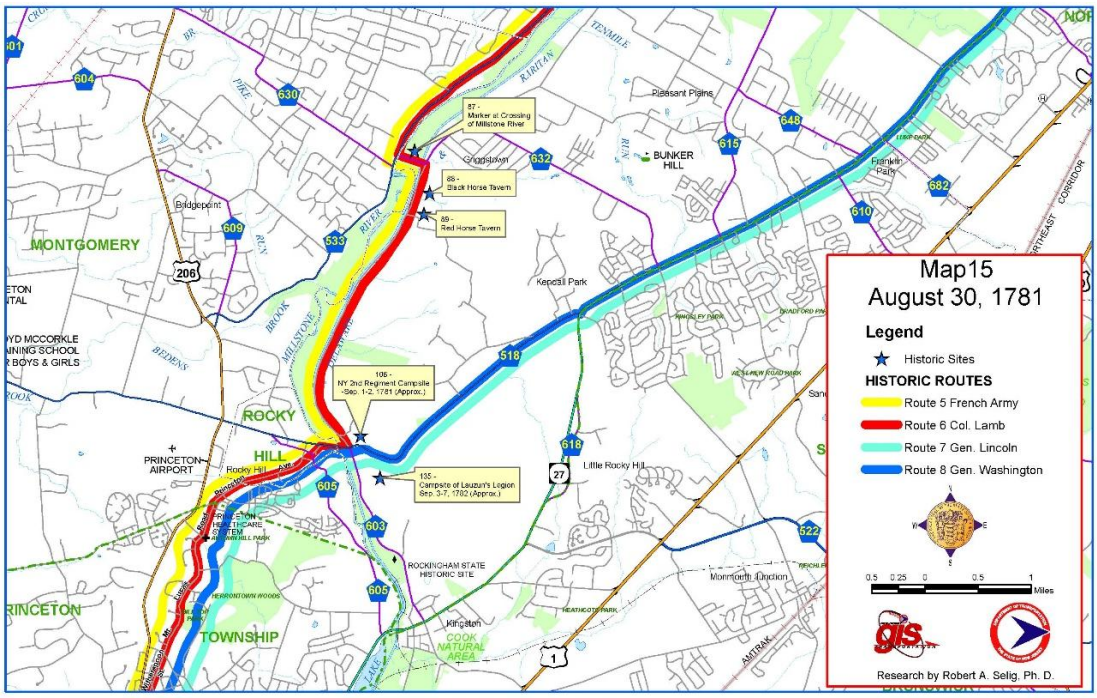
1775 map of Western Precinct*

The western boundary is the 1687 Keith Line (aka Province Line Road); the eastern boundary is the Millstone River; the northern boundary is Hillsborough. The southern boundary extended to the north side of Nassau Street, Princeton at this time. In 1798, Western Precinct was incorporated as Montgomery Township. In 1838, the NJ State Legislature created Mercer County and annexed Montgomery's land mass from Nassau Street north to south side of current day Cherry Valley Road (everything below red line was annexed). Rocky Hill, although noted on the map, was not a separate municipal govt from Montgomery until 1889.

*map from *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries 1606-1968* by John P. Synder

In August 1781, there were soldiers, thousands and thousands of soldiers, who passed through our local area – there were separate French (led by Rochambeau) & Continental (led by Colonel Lamb) contingents marching down the Millstone River Road from Somerset Courthouse entering Montgomery at Township Line Road. They crossed the river at Griggstown Causeway (the original bridge was actually a little west of the bridge that's there now) over to the east side of the river and continued to the Rocky Hill section of Montgomery. At the same time, two Continental contingents (one led by General Lincoln and the other by General Washington) were marching west on what is now Route 518. Their paths began converging just east of the Rocky Hill bridge in the Eastern Precinct (Franklin

today) as they marched toward Yorktown, Virginia. They then crossed the river again at Rocky Hill, turned left onto today's Crescent Avenue (it was the only east-west route in Rocky Hill at the time (Georgetown -Franklin Turnpike and 518 had not been built yet)) and onto Princeton Ave to Mt. Lucas Road, then encamping at Richard Stockton's Morven (part of Montgomery until 1838).



Robert A. Selig's map 15 with four routes

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We know a lot about this march and here is why:
Late in the year 2000, the United States Congress passed "A Bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to complete a resource study of the 600 mile route through Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia, used by George Washington and General Rochambeau during the American Revolutionary War." President Bill Clinton signed the bill on November 9 and Public Law No. 106-473, the *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000* was created.

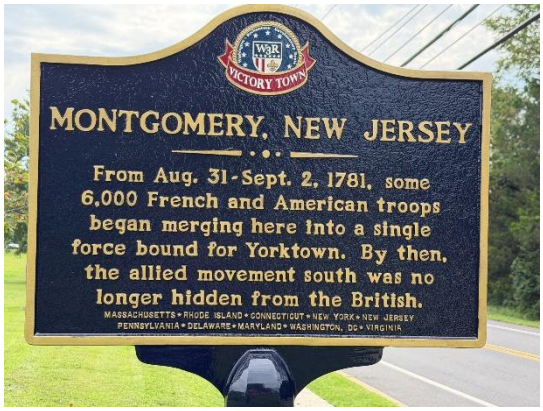
Robert A. Selig, Ph. D., was commissioned by State of New Jersey to prepare a "resource survey of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R) commemorating the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution in the State of New Jersey contributes to the federally mandated nine-state plus the District of Columbia National Historic Trail study authorized by Congress to be completed by 2006".

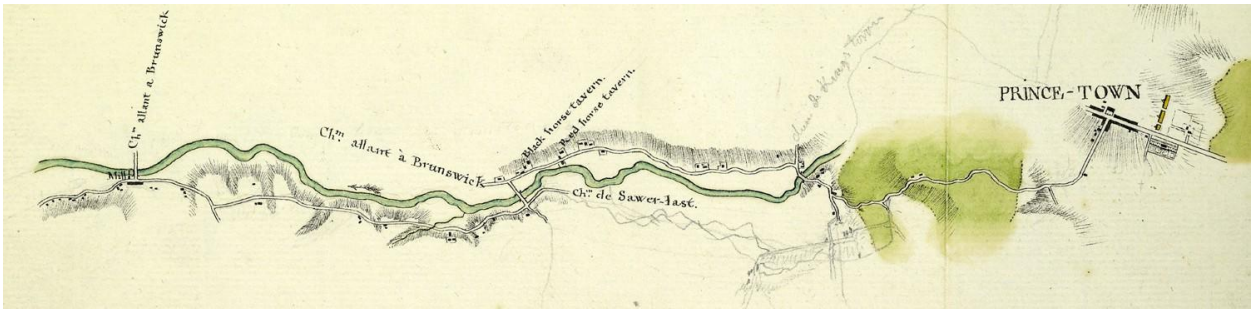
Link to ***The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in the state of New Jersey, 1781-1783: an historical and architectural survey*** by Robert A. Selig, Ph.D., Project Historian https://dspace.njstatelib.org/items/34113adb-0ed0-4c6a-9be1-8c33645be1f0)

N. B.: it is confusing to switch between 18th century and current names, particularly for roads. Please reach out for clarification if you have questions.

Van Harlingen Historical Society supports the practice of placing historical markers to support important historical events - as close as possible, considering safety and visibility, to where the historical event occurred. The roadways where this event took place still exist and are relatively unchanged.

Montgomery Township should be proud of its place in the history books and should portray that history as accurately as possible. As part of the 250th anniversary celebration, Montgomery Township officials have chosen to place a sign commemorating this event near the municipal building off Orchard Road. The sign is clearly worded to be placed along the route of the march. The wording on the sign, in its current location, gives a false impression about where the event happened. Orchard Road did not exist in the 18th century, and the event did not occur there. The sign should be moved to a location along the route of the march or, lacking that, it should be reworded to reflect where the event took place.





Map showing march from Somerset Court House (Millstone) to Princeton. It was drawn contemporaneously to the march by Louis-Alexandre Berthier, Rochambeau's cartographer.

Victory Town

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY



On August 28, units of the Continental Army under Benjamin Lincoln lay encamped at Springfield, while troops under John Lamb camped at Chatham. French forces under Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeaupositioned farther inland at Whippany.

Early on August 30, Colonel Lamb's column—about 550 men strong, including the artillery park, stores, a small wagon train, and several dozen women and children—marched from Middlebrook to Bound Brook and onward through Somerset and Millstone. Staying along the right bank of the Millstone River, they moved down Millstone River Road into Montgomery Township to Griggstown, crossed the river, continued to Kingston, recrossed the Millstone, and then marched through Princeton toward Trenton.

On August 31, the First French Brigade under Rochambeau entered Montgomery Township along Millstone River Road, crossed at Griggstown, continued to Rocky Hill where they crossed again, then marched down Princeton Avenue into present-day Montgomery. From there, Mount Lucas Road led them into Princeton.

Page posted on the national Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route website describing the local area route along Millstone River Road and then through Rocky Hill to Princeton: https://w3r-us.org/victory-towns/